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CARTER WON'T OPPOSE C.I.A. COST DISCLOSURE

Tells Adm. Turner Not to Object to
Releasing Overall Budget Figure
for Intelligence Operations

By MARJORIE HUNTER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 27—In a major break with tradition, the Carter Administration said today it would not oppose public disclosure of the intelligence community's total budget.

The Administration's stand was announced by Stansfield Turner, Director of Central Intelligence, before a Senate intelligence subcommittee studying the question of whether to make public any part of the nation's intelligence costs.

While announcing the Administration's position, Admiral Turner made it clear that he was acting on instructions from President Carter and not out of any conviction of his own.

"President Carter," he said, "has directed that I not object to your releasing to the public the single overall budget figure of the U. S. intelligence community."

Questioned by Chafee

"Would you be more comfortable not releasing the overall figure?" asked Senator John H. Chafee, Republican of Rhode Island.

"Oh, yes," Admiral Turner responded quickly. "There is a natural inclination

of any intelligence officer to withhold as much as possible."

Two former Directors of Central Intelligence—William E. Colby and Richard Helms—appeared before the subcommittee to urge Congress to continue keeping the intelligence community's budget secret. A third former Director, George Bush, submitted a statement expressing a similar view.

Just a few months ago, in answering written questions submitted at his confirmation hearings, Admiral Turner had argued that public disclosure of the intelligence budget could be dangerous.

Risk Is Conceded

In disclosing the Administration's stand today, he conceded that public disclosure would not be "without risk." And he firmly opposed any more detailed breakdown of the intelligence budget, contending that it would do "irreparable harm to our country."

Why then, he was asked, is the Administration not objecting to any public disclosure?

"Times change; the attitudes of the country has changed," he replied. "The credibility of the intelligence community has been questioned. It's necessary to rebuild that credibility."

Furthermore, he said, "we are a free and open society," adding that it was "appropriate that our citizens be kept as well informed as possible about the activities of their Government."

Some compromise is necessary, he said, between the "risks of giving the enemy an unnecessary advantage over us and of protecting the basic openness of our society."

Sharp Division in Senate

While the Administration is proposing public disclosure of a total figure, what Congress will do is far from certain. There is sharp division within the subcommittee and the full Senate Select Committee on Intelligence over whether any part of the intelligence budget should be made public.

In June 1974, the Senate voted, 55 to 33, against an amendment that would have required disclosure of the total intelligence budget. In October 1975, the House voted, 267 to 147, against public disclosure.